DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 915 SP 036 714

AUTHOR Freidus, Helen
TITLE Portfolios: A Pedagogy of Possibility in Teacher Education.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Knowledge Base for Teaching; Masters Programs; *Portfolio Assessment; *Portfolios (Background Materials); Preservice Teacher Education; *Student Evaluation; Student Teacher Attitudes; Student Teachers; Teacher Educators; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Bank Street College of Education NY

ABSTRACT

The motivation to explore the use of portfolios in the Bank Street College (New York) program of teacher education emerged in response to a range of serious concerns about how the program met the needs of today's teacher and classrooms. The portfolio process as implemented at Bank Street is designed to be learner centered. It asks students to: (1) identify and discuss the artifacts that they find most significant in their personal and professional development; (2) identify connections between and among artifacts; (3) reflect upon these connections in order to identify a unifying theme; (4) examine artifacts and themes from both personal and theoretical perspectives; and (5) participate in public presentations of the portfolio. The completed portfolio includes artifacts such as audio tapes, videotapes, picture collages, and various writing genres; one- or two-page captions to accompany each artifact; and an introductory framing statement. The work of each student is supported by individual meetings between students and faculty portfolio mentors and a series of required monthly meetings that provide opportunities for peer mentoring. Data for a study of the process were gathered from 47 Master's degree students who chose to take part in a pilot project using portfolios as a culminating project. Study findings support the assumption that portfolios have the potential to be a generative and transformative pedagogical tool, involving students in the process of setting and meeting goals that bridge personal and professional funds of knowledge. The data also suggest, however, that constraints to achieving this potential emerge from the prior experiences of both faculty and students, the structures of institutions of learning, and the pervasive influence of a traditional authority relationship. (Contains 49 references.) (ND)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 395 915

Portfolios : A Pedagogy of Possibility in Teacher Education

by

Helen Freidus, Ed.D.
Bank Street College of Education
New York, New York

A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of
the American Educational Research Association

New York City, April, 1996

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. Freidus

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

SP036714

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Portfolios : A Pedagogy of Possibility in Teacher Education

by

Helen Freidus, Ed.D.
Bank Street College of Education
New York, New York

Since what I was learning only made sense to me inside of a particular classroom, at times, I was unable to take what I had learned into different contexts. ...I Lacked the self awareness that comes with being an active participant in my own learning (Betty, 1995)

Introduction

In recent years, teacher educators and teacher education programs have come under severe criticism. State and national education organizations, educational critics like Bennett, Hirsch and others have called attention to the perceived gap between the philosophical and theoretical nature of teacher preparation programs and the real needs of teachers and schools. Parents say, "Our children are not learning." New teachers say, "We were not prepared to teach in today's schools."

As caring and concerned teacher educators, we are perplexed. While acknowledging that the challenges of today's schools are becoming increasingly complex and that, in most circumstances, a Master's Degree in education only places individuals at the starting point of their journey to become truly effective teachers, we believe that many of the programs we offer are relevant and well-constructed. We spend long hours in research and reflection weaving together theory and practice. We teach our classes and work with our students in the field consciously endeavoring to prepare teachers ideologically and methodologically for the realities of today's classrooms. We believe that what we do makes sense.

The disparity between the perceptions of teacher educators and the realities of classroom practice has been little studied. It is possible that the problem may lie not in what teachers know but in their ability to access and implement their knowledge. Professional knowledge learned but never fully integrated with personal knowledge may constitute an overlay of theory and skills, readily elicited within the context of the

university but likely to fade away within the more complicated environment of the classroom. The problem may lie less in the learning of new ideas and theories, techniques and methodologies, than in the unlearning of the old (A. Freud, 1965 ; Fraiberg, 1959; Liston & Zeichner, 1990).

Pedagogical methods and assessment tools used by programs of teacher education may have significant impact on both the process of learning and that of unlearning. This study explores the possibility that the use of portfolios in teacher education may enable teachers to become more cognizant of and better able to integrate, access, voice, and enact personal and professional funds of knowledge and beliefs. It identifies ways in which deep - rooted attitudes and behaviors appear to interfere with the enactment of transformative visions of learner - centered education. It describes the ways in which mentoring relationships work to extend the boundaries of learner - centered teacher education set within institutional contexts where structures of power and authority are somewhat traditional and also pays attention to the ways in which these traditional structures impact on and complicate the nature of these relationships.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the work of cognitive psychology (Piaget, 1955; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1987) and contemporary educational research (Duckworth, 1987; Clandinin & Connelly,1995) that suggests the ways in which teachers act and react in their own classrooms are directly related to their own experiences, their own prior knowledge, and their own philosophical and ideological constructs. It is supported by the body of literature that demonstrates the beliefs teachers hold about teaching, learning, culture, and society have profound impact on their actions in classrooms (Apple, 1986,92; Bullough, 1989; Clark & Peterson,1986; Knowles,1991). Teachers need help in making their tacitly held beliefs conscious lest these beliefs limit their own growth and development and, in turn, that of their students.

The study is also supported by the literature of feminism (Gilligan,1992; Belenky,1986) and multiculturalism (Banks,1993 Moll, 1991; Garcia,1993; Grant & Sleeter, 1988) that documents the existence of diverse ways of learning and knowing. Informed by this research, we can no longer believe that there is one right way to prepare all teachers. Those practices that are most promising are those that elicit and build upon prior knowledge, validate prior experience, and allow teachers to be participants in the process of setting and meeting their own educational goals (Moll & Greenberg,1991, Belenky,1986). This literature recognizes that dilemnas that may rise when the prior knowledge that has meant success for teachers in school and in the work place conflicts with the transformative visions of education they espouse (Lyons, 1990; Clandinin & Connnelly, 1995).

In addition, the study is consistent with the literature of learner centered accountability (Darling Hammond & Goodwin, 1993; Darling Hammond, Garcia & Pearson, 1994) that articulates the need to identify what students of all ages really know and then use that knowledge as a basis for curriculum development, instruction, and assessment. Portfolios represent a way in which the evaluative criteria of teaching can be shaped within the context of each teacher's life and work.

Methodology

This study documents three cohorts of men and women (n = 47) who chose to participate in a pilot project using portfolios as a culminating project for their Masters Degree at a small, urban, graduate school of education. Students represented diverse program areas of teacher education (pre-service, in-service, bilingual, reading and literacy, special education). A case study approach was chosen as most appropriate for recording, interpreting, and comparing data gathered throughout each cohort's participation in the portfolio process. As students identified and documented the personal and professional journeys that led them to become teachers and administrators, faculty mentors explored, documented, and shared their perceptions of their role as mentors in the process.

Data was scanned on an ongoing basis with the goal of identifying common patterns that emerged from the experiences of individuals participating in the portfolio process. Particular attention was paid to experiences that documented the linking of personal cultures and epistemologies with the culture and epistemology of the mainstream professional world. Through a process of reference to the literature and *constant comparison* of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), emergent categories were identified. Data sources were than once again scanned and coded according to identified categories. Throughout the process, each stage of data collection informed and was informed by the next.

Data Collection

A variety of data-generating tools have been utilized in this study. These include tape recordings and selected transcriptions of individual conferences, peer group meetings, student presentations and faculty mentor meetings. Videotapes of final presentations provided additional data as did the completed portfolios themselves. Portfolios included statements of personal philosophy, captions that provided a statement of the personal meaning of each artifact and the ways in which the creator saw it linking to theory in the field, and a concluding statement articulating future goals. A final debriefing session following each set of final presentations provided the opportunity for students to reflect on their perceptions of the portfolio experience. Data from these sessions was recorded and selections were transcribed. The use of multiple lenses for data collection made it possible to *triangulate* data (Glazer & Strauss, 1967) adding greater substance to findings and interpretations.

Exploring the Problem

During the past fifteen to twenty years there has been a significant change in the discourse of educational research and practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). From local task forces to state and national committees, the language of the mainstream has moved toward the advocacy of learner centered practice. This change has emerged from a growing understanding of the educational implications of diversity and a

recognition that cultural and linguistic background, personal experience, and learning styles as well as numerous other factors impact on how and what people learn. With this understanding has come a new enthusiasm for holistic and process oriented approaches to teaching and learning. However, in the swell of enthusiasm with which these approaches are being greeted, there has been a tendency to gloss over their complexity and a tendency to underestimate just how difficult it is for teachers who have rarely if ever been students in learner centered classes to internalize the beliefs and practices that are the underpinnings of current educational philosophy.

There is a similar tendency to underestimate the extent to which the implicit and explicit structures of institutions of teacher education are inconsistent with their espoused support for learning centered practice and the degree to which this inconsistency compromises efforts to foster educational reform. Today's progressive institutions of teacher education commonly speak the language of learner centered practice. They encourage students to reconceptualize their roles as teachers, to question the most fundamental and seemingly innocuous practices of classroom life, and to take on active roles in determining what schooling can and should be. Many classes are devoted to creating forums for discussing these ideas and teaching methodologies consonant with them. However, learning centered practice also involves redefining the relationship between authority and education (O'Loughlin, 1992). Here, the institutional stance is often fuzzier. What students hear and what they experience are often at odds. Even when institutions consciously struggle to make the course of graduate study collaborative in nature, the history, structures, and perceived responsibilities of academia may well communicate another message.

The Decision to Implement Portfolios

The motivation to explore the use of portfolios in the Bank Street College program of teacher education emerged as a response to a range of serious concerns about the form and substance of the work we as teacher educators do. Historically, Bank Street evolved under the leadership of Lucy Sprague Mitchell in the 1930's as an

institution closely associated with the progressive school movement in New York City. As such, its programs of teacher education focused on the preparation of teachers for work in independent schools. Over time, the mission of the institution changed; the focus broadened to include the preparation of teachers and children working in both public and private contexts. Today, Bank Street has been described as a "private institution with a public mission" (Augusta Kavner, President: Bank Street College, September, 1995). The student body of the graduate school, the classrooms in which they train, and the classrooms in which they will ultimately teach increasingly reflect the diversity of the New York metropolitan area. Consequently, there is a pressing concern to examine the mesh between the traditional pedagogies and structures of Bank Street and the needs of today's teachers and classrooms.

Many faculty members recognize that teaching styles and pedagogies initially shaped to give voice to a more homogenous community of teachers and students may inadvertently silence members of today's widely diverse population. Consequently, there has been a recognition of the need to explore new educational pedagogies in order to increase dialogue, broaden each person's understanding of self and other, and better establish the kind of connected community that nurtures personal and professional growth. The assumption behind the call for dialogue was that:

> ...Dialogue does not assume up front that people are the same, speak the same way, or are interested in the same issues. It only assumes that people are committed to a process of communication directed toward interpersonal understanding and that they hold, or are willing to develop, some degree of concern for, interest in, and respect toward one another. (Burbules,1993, p.25)

Organizationally, Bank Street is a small, unaffiliated graduate school of education; philosophically, it is grounded in a perspective of developmental-interaction (Shapiro & Biber, 1972). This perspective is characterized by a belief in the dynamic process of teaching and learning, a valuing of both autonomy and community as the outcomes of the educational process, and a vision of education as an instrument for social change and, thus, a profoundly social and political process. Bank Street sees itself

as a learner - centered institution, placing great import on the voices of both children and teachers and the communities which shape and are shaped by these voices (Antler, 1987). Within this context, portfolios were seen as a pedagogical tool through which faculty and students with very different backgrounds, disciplines, and learning and teaching styles might engage together in a process of mutual learning.

According to Cagan (1978 in Goodman, 1995, p.4) "the effectiveness [of a given pedagogical activity] depends on the extent to which adults are clear in their understanding of the ideological underpinnings of this pedagogy." Thus, there appeared to be a goodness - of - fit between the portfolio model in which students are charged with describing and documenting their own professional journey in ways that are personally and professionally meaningful and the ideological values of both faculty and students. This goodness - of - fit suggested that portfolios would be an effective pedagogical tool in the Bank Street context.

The Portfolio Design

As implemented at Bank Street, the Portfolio Process is designed to be learner centered. It asks students: 1) to identify and discuss the artifacts that they find most significant in their personal and professional development[1], 2) to identify connections between and among artifacts and 3) to reflect upon these connections in order to identify a unifying theme, 4) examine artifacts and theme from both personal and theoretical perspectives, and 5) participate in public presentations of the Portfolio. This process was designed to identify and strengthen the bridges connecting personal knowledge, academic knowledge, and knowledge of the field.

The completed portfolio includes:

---

[1] Included in the artifacts must be documentation of a student's understanding of theory and practice in the domains of Human Development, Curriculum, History and Philosophy of Education, and Social Context of Learning.

1. Artifacts - Six artifacts documenting understanding of or competency in four domains[2] of teacher education. The artifacts addressing these domains should document practice informed by theory and personal reflection. Artifacts are represented through diverse media including but not limited to audio-tapes, video tapes, picture collages, charts, graphs, and a variety of writing genres.

2. Captions - A one to two page caption accompanies each artifact. These captions provide a rationale for the inclusion of the artifact in the portfolio and relate the artifact to an emergent theme which connects the artifacts. Captions provide responses to the questions: What have I learned from the experience represented by each artifact? How has this learning shaped or been shaped by my educational vision, my personal values, and the theory I have studied? What implications has this experience had for my work with children?

3. Framing Statements - An introduction of three to five pages articulates the theme and relates it to the individual's philosophy of teaching. A concluding statement, also three to five pages, synthesizes the work included in the portfolio and, with references to relevant theory, discusses the educational implications of the theme and the student's personal journey. Portfolios are expected to conclude not with answers but with questions raised throughportfolio the process of research and reflection

The portfolio requirements define what is to be addressed. How these requirements are to be addressed - what is to be included and how it is to be represented - is open-ended and differs from portfolio to portfolio. With this intent in mind, requirements were kept to a minimum. The goal of the portfolio process is documentation of the unique professional journey of each student.

Individual students construct their own portfolios, but in the process of doing so, they are actively engaged with the community of faculty and peers. They participate in

---

[2] Domains refer to disciplines or perspectives. The domains that must be clearly represented by artifacts include human development, educational history and philosophy, the social context of teaching, and curriculum.

the portfolio process as a cohort, beginning their work in early fall and concluding with a formal presentation in the spring. The work of each student is supported and extended by individual meetings between students and faculty portfolio mentors and a series of required monthly meetings providing opportunities for peer mentoring.

Findings from the Use of Portfolios

Redefining Authority: Developing Autonomy

From the earliest discussions exploring whether the use of portfolios would mesh with Bank Street's educational vision, mentoring was seen as an important component of the process. It was felt that personal relationships with faculty members would facilitate students' efforts to document their professional journeys. Dialogical relationships would scaffold students' efforts to identify and articulate the connections between their personal and the professional funds of knowledge. Over the course of the study these relationships were found to be meaningful but insufficient

At the debriefing session following the final presentation of the first year's portfolios, students spoke of the informal peer relationships many of them had developed and the ways in which they had mentored each other. They suggested that forums for peer sharing be built systematically into the portfolio process. The suggestion was enacted the following year. Monthly meetings in which faculty and students might elect to share their work were scheduled. Student attendance was dismal. Yet, at that year's debriefing session, a similar request was made. When faculty pointed out that meetings had been scheduled but few had come. Students responded: "We wish we had." With these responses in mind, a decision was made to require the meetings for the next cohort. If the sessions proved fruitful, they would become a formal part of the requirements. If not, there would be no more attention paid to the call for institutionalized forums for peer dialogue. During this year of required sessions, attendance was excellent; dialogue was rich. Students valued faculty input but, as their predecessors had suggested, appeared to gain special strength from the feedback of their peers.

> It's really nice to know that everybody's in the same boat as you..to have the support of colleagues..working alone with your mentor, you think, "What am I doing?" (Transcript, February, 1995 Peer Meeting)

The data suggests that the tacit assumptions underlying the development of early portfolio structures reflect some of the most important issues and tensions in the field today. These include questions about the redefinition of authority and the development of autonomy in learners of all ages. The assumption that faculty would be valuable supports for students indicates the valuing of the collaborative process. However, also included in this assumption is a traditional notion of the expert - novice relationship. Even when defined, as it is at Bank Street (Yonemura, 1991), as a relationship of more and less experienced colleagues working together, such a relationship is, by definition, hierarchical in nature.

The goal of the portfolio process is, however, for students to be authors of their own learning. In this process, the roles of expert and novice become blurred. The faculty member has greater understanding of the professional world and the theoretical constructs embedded in it. However, the student possesses expertise on his or her own journey and the meaning he or she makes of it. Where the private and the professional merge, as they are intended to do in the portfolio process, the possession of expertise becomes murky. When student and mentor disagree, as some are bound to do, whose knowledge counts most and how does this get negotiated and resolved?

Furthermore, while portfolio at Bank Street, was implemented to broaden dialogue among a community of learners, faculty members did not initially consider the importance of peer dialogue in this process. This omission is particularly interesting in the Bank Street context where the advisement process is so valued a part of the learning process education. Every graduate program at Banks Street includes advisement, a process comprised of individual meetings between faculty members and students, classroom visits, and, perhaps most important of all, conference group. During conference group, 5-7 students advised by the same faculty member during

their year of field placement, meet together with that faculty member on a weekly basis to make meaning of their newly emerging personae as teachers.

> Advisement (the conference group) was like no other experience I have ever had as a learner. The curriculum was emergent; the experiences we ourselves had were the raw material for reflection and critique. I was a student but I was also a teacher. (Ayers, 1991)

Yonemura (1991) describes the importance of the conference group as a time when, within the interdependence of a small social group, students have an opportunity to become more "themselves" by assuming a sense of responsibility for their own learning as well as the other person's and the group's. The structures of advisement, so valued at Bank Street in preparing teachers of learner - centered classrooms, are reflected in the role of the mentor in the Portfolio process. The faculty - teacher dyad with its potential for dialogue was seen as essential. The relevance of peer group was, however overlooked. When the students pointed out their need for broader dialogue, faculty members were receptive. Many wondered why it had not been thought of from the beginning.

Equally interesting and problematic is the reality that teachers and student teachers participating in the portfolio process recognized and valued collaboration and dialogical learning but were not willing or able to informally develop or attend ongoing peer forums until they were formally required. It was only during the third year of the study, when the meetings became required that participation became enthusiastic and benefits were clear to faculty and students alike.

Belief in One's Own Knowledge and Skills

Learner centered classrooms are predicated upon a belief that student's must share in the responsibility for their own learning. Teachers have the responsibility of setting up environments that support and nurture diverse ways of learning (Dewey,1933; Calkins,1986 ; Darling-Hammond,1992), but students are partners in the process of goal-setting. If this process is to be successful, teachers and students must believe in their own competence and trust in their own knowledge and skills. Yet, in a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

myriad of ways, the data from this study indicates that for many teachers, as for children, this kind of self - confidence cannot be assumed. The long process of socialization that encourages children to look to teachers and teachers to look to administrators for confirmation of a job well done has been well-internalized.

> Portfolio seemed the best possible option to culminate my time at Bank Street. ...Yet my traditional education has been hard to shake, and at time I have been paralyzed by fears of my work not being good enough, 'correct', of my not doing it right. I think that I spend a good deal of energy teaching myself, reminding myself to ...embrace the chances I get to represent myself AS I AM, as I have discovered myself as a teacher and learner rather than allowing an imposed structure or standard to guide my process and my sense of self. (Alice, portfolio caption excerpt, 1995)

Words like "fear," "paralyzed" "anxious" can be found repeatedly in the speech and writings of many portfolio candidates. Among other portfolio candidates, these feelings are acted out rather than spoken. Students who have done the most amazing work - one, for example, whose final portfolio included a videotape documenting a project in which adolescents in the Bronx to worked together with senior citizens in a nearby Jewish Home for the Aged to record the history of the Grand Concourse - often resist choosing an artifact or delay writing a caption because they fear that their work is not "good enough" (mentor notes, Spring, 1995).

When finally, these students choose their artifacts, write their captions, and reflect on the process, they frequently come to see the inconsistency between the attitudes and behaviors they exhibit in their role as students and the attitudes and behaviors they want the students they teach to exhibit. One strength of the portfolio process seems to be the way in which it encourages students to see themselves in new ways, become more cognizant and appreciative of their own learning process, and, in so doing, begin to develop a sense of confidence in who they are and what they know.

> One of the hardest parts in making my portfolio was choosing the six representative artifacts. Looking back at my work of the last two years, I found projects that I liked, that had challenged and stimulated me - but I felt basically dissatisfied with them. Nothing was as good as I wanted it to be. Where was the excellence? Where were the perfect jewels of

> accomplishment? All I could see were the flaws, and it pained me to realize that my completed portfolio would contain flaws. It has taken me a long time to realize that, in a sense, it should contain flaws. Teaching, I have learned, is a process of taking calculated risks, assessing the outcome, especially the flaws - and living to risk again. Learning, too, follows this basic structure. (Peg, caption excerpt, 1993)

Encountering Disequilibrium

During the portfolio process, there is invariably a period of disequilibrium common to all open-ended learning; this is experienced by mentors and students alike. Students feel "overwhelmed", "fragmented", "maybe, this is just not for me." Their anxiety can be contagious. Successful mentors, like successful classroom teachers, face the challenge of distinguishing between the disequilibrium inherent in the process and actual lack of information and/or skills. When students understand the challenge and have the knowledge and resources to craft meaningful responses, it is important for mentors to listen patiently to the sharing of murky thought. However, when students reveal genuine gaps in their knowledge base, it is important for mentorsto become more directive, guiding them to relevant resources or offering instruction related to the nature of the need, helping them to connect the information and insights with which they are grappling to the knowledge they already possess. Discerning between creative floundering and missing skills and/ or information is a complex and often anxiety-provoking task.

> I have to keep asking myself: "Do I not understand what this student is saying because of my lack of knowledge, or because his or her thought processes are not adequately articulated." (Elaine, mentor meeting transcript, 1995).

Intervening too soon runs the risk of preventing students from shaping their own ideas into their own constructions of meaning; failure to recognize the need for help, on the other hand, runs the risk of leaving students without the tools they need to function autonomously.

The task is even more complex when students are drawing upon a knowledge base grounded in cultural, linguistic, or personal ways of knowing foreign to the

mentor. However, the data indicates that when faculty actively listen and search out a point of commonalty between their own experiences and those of their students, the goals of developing voice and extending community appear more likely. In responding to a portfolio in which a Latina student was working with the theme "Acculturation vs. Separation," a faculty portfolio reader wrote:

> ...I found it enormously interesting to consider your theme of Acculturation and Separation. It stimulated my thinking about the difficult problems involved in coming to another place. It made me think of the much broader field of growth and maturation which continues throughout life. It made me think of my mother and father who also came to another place a long time ago. ... All through our lives we are forced to decide what to leave behind, what to incorporate as our own and what we are able to keep. (Leona., Mentor Comments, 4/95)

At the final debriefing session, the student to whom this was written described the meaning of the portfolio process for her:

> "Portfolio helped me to look at myself as well as my culture and background. It made me reflect on my own experience in a new way. Lucy Sprague Mitchell said children don't leave their lives outside the classroom. Adults don't either." (Rosa, Spring. 95)

These words validated her experiences on both professional and personal levels and enabled her to examine and make meaning of her life experience within the context of professional dialogue.

Discussion

Portfolios were chosen to be included as an option for the culminating process at Bank Street because of the promise they held as a tool for open- ended learning. Their appeal was the possibility that they would provide space for the expression and documentation of different voices, different learning styles, different cultural experiences, and consequently, different professional journeys. The portfolio process was constructed, in essence, to elicit ethnographic studies of self as professional. "Ethnography strives to portray human experience as closer to an on-going rather than a finished endeavor," writes Caspar. "The ethnographer," she continues, "is constantly trying to peel away preconceptions as he or she observes, listens, lets patterns/ themes

emerge from the work and does interpretative work. Finally theory is pulled out of the meanings people give to their experience (Casper, 1996, p.15).

The portfolio process is intended to encourage students to peel away both personal and professional preconceptions by seeking out and interpreting patterns and themes present in their professional journey. In supporting students in this effort, faculty, too, are encouraged to peel away their preconceptions, recognize both new and familiar patterns and themes, and ultimately gain insight into the meaning they and their students give to the teaching experience. The data indicates that this open-ended process, intended to affirm and validate diverse ways of knowing, has proven to be a source of enormous tension for many students and for many mentors as well. For most, however, it has also proven to be a source of significant growth.

Related to this, the data indicates that relationships of trust are essential to the portfolio process. Students who have made it to graduate school have succeeded at mastering the traditional hurdles of schools and schooling. Now they are engaging - albeit by their own choice - in a process that is very different. When, in the portfolio process, students endeavor to document and share their own personal and professional development, they take significant risks. What they know, how they think, how they respond in times of comfort and in times of stress are opened for scrutiny - first privately by self, then more publicly by others. Student after student has been heard to remark: "I never expected this to be so emotional an experience. It's so intensely personal." Students appear willing to engage in this process only when they feel that who they are and what they believe is respected and valued. Students who are told portfolios are to document their own journeys but come to feel there is an unspoken expectation of what the form and substance of this journey should be appear to refrain from deep reflection or honest sharing. Their portfolios resemble documents of professional accomplishments rather than ethnographies.

One of the strongest tensions emerging from this study of the use of portfolios is the potential conflict between autonomous learning and the evaluation process. Faculty

mentors need to balance the goal of learner centered practice with the reality that grades, degrees, and even certification may rest on portfolio outcomes. Mentors have the responsibility of facilitating the construction of portfolios that are intellectually as well as emotionally meaningful. It is their role to argue for more clarity, more reflection, more academic rigor while encouraging their students to voice their own stories. Like their students, most mentors have been socialized and educated in hierarchical settings, achieving their professional accomplishments by mastering the same traditional hurdles of schools and schooling. For many of them, the role of mentor in the portfolio process is uncharted territory. They are not always certain how to support students in an emergent process or how to balance the sometimes competing epistemologies of personal and professional knowledge.

A second tension that emerges is the deep-seated influence of traditional structures of authority despite a cognitive commitment to collaboration. As much as collaboration appears to be valued by faculty mentors, it poses hard challenges for those who, like their students, have themselves been schooled in a hierarchical paradigm. Nancy Atwell sums up the feelings and experiences of many when she writes of her own early experiences implementing learner centered curriculum:

> Eventually I saw through my defenses to the truth. I didn't know how to share responsibility with my students, and I wasn't too sure I wanted to. (Atwell, 1987, p.11)

It is possible that faculty members at Bank Street neglected to include peer forums in the early stages of portfolio structures because they underestmated the complexity of the process and the anxiety it would generate in students. It is also possible, however, that this omission suggests a way in which their own educational socialization mittigates against the systematic sharing of responsibility and authority with students. If this is a tension at Bank Street, where since all faculty members share the rank of instructor and no one has tenure, individuals have little to risk and, in fact, much to gain from sharing the rewards of collaborative enterprises, how much greater

the tension must be for faculty in institutions of higher learning whose reward systems are predicated upon the publicly acknowledged accomplishments of the individual.

Conclusion

Data from this study supports the assumption that portfolios have the potential to be a pedagogical tool that is generative and transformative, involving students participating in programs of teacher education in the process of setting and meeting goals that bridge personal and professional funds of knowledge. However, the data also suggests that there are significant constraints to achievement of this potential. These constraints appear to emerge from the prior experiences of both faculty and students, the structures of institutions of learning, and the pervasive influence of traditional authority relationships. The ways in which portfolios encourage faculty and students to identify and explore their own preconceptions, recognize new and familiar patterns, and become increasingly cognizant of the meaning they attribute to the process of teaching and learning supports the inclusion of portfolios among the promising practices of the nineties.

References

Anson, C. (1994). Portfolios for teachers: Writing our way to reflective practice. In L, Black, D. Daiker, et.al. (Ed.). New directions in portfolio assessment. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton Cook

Antler, J. (1987). Lucy Sprague Mitchell: The making of a modern woman. New Haven: Yale University Press

Apple, M. (1986). Teachers & texts: A political economy of class and gender relations in education. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

(1992). Official knowledge. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ayers, W. (1991, Summer). Spreading out its roots: Bank Street advisement and the education of a teacher In Thought & Practice, 3(1)

Atwell, N. (1987). In the middle. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton Cook/ Heinemann

Banks, J. (1993). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practice. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), Review of research in education 19 (pp3-50). Washington. D.C.:AERA

Banks, J. & Banks, C.M. (Eds.) (1993). Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives (2nd edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., et. al., (1986). Women's ways of knowing. N.Y.: Basic Books

Bullough, R. (1989). First year teacher. NY: Teachers College Press

Burbules, N. (1993). Dialogue in teaching. NY: Teachers College Press

Brookfield, S. (1986). Understanding and facilitating adult learning. San Fransisco: Jossey Bass.

Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. Social Research, 54 (1), 11-32.

Calkins, L. (1986). The art of teaching writing. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann

Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, M. (1995) Teachers professional knowledge landscapes. New York: Teachers College Press

Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, M. (1992). Teacher as curriculum maker. In P. Jackson (Ed.) Handbook of research on curriculum (pp,363-401). N.Y.: MacMillan

Clark, C. & Peterson, P. (1986). Teachers thought processes. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (3rd edition, pp255-96). N.Y.:MacMillan

Darling-Hammond, L. (1992). Standards of practice for learner-centered schools. N.Y.: NCREST

Darling-Hammond, L. & Snyder, J. (1992). Framing accountability: Creating learner-centered schools. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), The changing contexts of teaching, NSSE Yearbook

Darling-Hammond, L. & Goodwin, L. (1993). Progrss towards professionalism in teaching. In G. Kawelti (Ed.), Ghallenges andacievements of American education (pp19-52). Alexandre VA: ASCD

Delpit, L. D. (1988). The silenced dialogue Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. Harvard Educational Review. 58, 280-298

Delpit, L. D. (1994). Other people's children. NY: The New Press

Dewey, J. (1904). The relation of theory to practice in education. The Third NSSE Yearbook (Part I). Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago.

Dewey, J. (1938, 63). Experience and education. NY: Collier Books

Dewey, J. (1959). The child and the curriculum. In Dworkin, M. (Ed.). Dewey on education. NY: Teachers College Press

Duckworth, E. (1987). The having of wonderful ideas. NY: Teachers College Press

Duckworth, E. (1986). Teaching as research. Harvard Educational Review. 4(56), 481-95.

Eisner, E. (1991). The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice. NY: Macmillan

Elbaz, F. (1983). Teacher thinking: A study of practical knowledge. N.Y.: Nichols

Fraiberg, S. (1959). The magic years. New York: Scribners

Freud, A. (1965). Normality and pathology in childhood. NY: International Universities Press

Garcia, E. (1993). Language, culture, and education. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), Review of research in education 19 (pp51-100). Washington, D.C.:AERA

Garcia, G. & Pearson, P.D. (1994). Assessment and diversity. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), Review of research in education 20 (pp337-391). Washington, D.C.:AERA

Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Gilligan, C., Ward, J.V., & Taylor, J.M. (1988). Mapping the moral domain. Cambridge, Mass: Center for the study of gender, education and human development

Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. N.Y.: Aldine

Goodman, J. (1992). Working in schools: Emancipatory theorizing and educational reform.. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco

Goodman, J. (1995). Change without difference: School restructuring in historical perspective. Harvard Educational Review, 65,1 pp.1-29

Grant, C. & Sleeter, C. (1988). Race, class, gender and abandoned dreams, Teachers College Record. 90(1).

Greene, M. (1978). Landscapes of learning. NY: Teachers College Press

Greene, M. (1994). Epistemology and educational research: The influence of recent approaches to knowledge. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), Review of research in education 20 (pp423-464). Washington, D.C.:AERA

Knowles, J. G. & Holt-Reynolds, D. (1991). Shaping pedagogies through personal histories in preservice teacher education. Teachers College Record. 93(1).

Liston, D. P. & Zeichner, K. M. (1990). Teacher education and the social context of schooling: Issues for curriculum development. American Education Research Journal, 27(4), 610-638.

Moll, L. & Greenberg, (1990). Creating zones of possibilities : Combining social contexts for instruction, In L. Moll (Ed.) Vygotsky and education. NY: Cambridge

O'Loughlin, Michael. (November-December,1992). Engaging teachers in emancipatory knowledge construction. Journal of teacher education. 43(5) 336-46.

Piaget, J. (1932). The moral judgments of children. N.Y.: The Free Press

Piaget, J. (1926, 55). The language and thought of the child. Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Co.

Shapiro, E. & Biber, B. (1972, Sept.). The education of young children: A developmental interaction approach. Teachers college record. 74(1), 55-79.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind and society. (M. Cole, et. al, editors). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (1991). Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education. NY: Teachers College Press